

2019-2023

Strategic Plan

Morton Mandan Public Library



Morton Mandan Public Library Strategic Plan

The Morton Mandan Public Library staff, board members, and patrons assisted in the development of this strategic plan over a ten month period. The plan will be reviewed annually or as needed by the Library Board, Library Director, and Library Assistant Director.

Statistical details were compiled by information from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2012-2016 American Community Survey and the community profile completed by the City of Mandan in 2016

Mission Statement

The mission of the Morton Mandan Public Library is to provide the hub for community education, enrichment, and entertainment.

Core Values

- Encourage a love of reading
- Safe environment
- Everyone's respected
- Future oriented
- Stewardship of resources
- Connecting people and ideas
- Sense of community
- Supporting education
- Supporting the arts
- Access to current technology
- Supporting literacy

Community Profile

Mandan is located in central North Dakota It is the county seat and largest town in Morton County and is the state's eighth-largest city. As part of the Bismarck-Mandan MSA, it is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the country, with the population increase of nearly 13% since 2010 (City of Mandan, p. 4). Morton County is the fifth most-populated county in the state.

Population

As of 2017, the population of Morton County was 30,796 with 22,228 residing in Mandan. The median age is 37.5 years and 20.8% of the population is 60 or older (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Mandan has a housing occupancy rate of 92% and a rental vacancy rate of 0.4% (City of Mandan, p.4)

Education

61% of the population has at least some college education (City of Mandan, p. 4). The public education system in Mandan includes 6 elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school with

nearly 3,750 students (City of Mandan, p. 7). Opportunities for higher education are primarily located in Bismarck, though there is also Sitting Bull College in Ft. Yates and Bismarck State College has a campus presence in Mandan as well.

Language and Ethnicity

93.6% of the population identifies as white, with American Indian or Alaska Native representing 3.6 % of the population. 1.5% identifies as Hispanic or Latino. 95.7% of the population speaks only English. 2.1% speak Spanish, and 2% speak an “other Indo-European” language (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016).

Employment

The mean income for Morton County is 77,866 and the median is 55,322 (U.S Census Bureau, 2016). The average household income for Mandan within a 5-mile trade radius is \$74,798. The average is estimated to increase to \$85,250 in 2020 (City of Mandan, p.5).

Healthcare and social assistance, government, and retail trade are the top three employment industries and make up 42% of the total employment in the county. Unemployment has had an annual average of 3%-4.6% over the past decade (City of Mandan, p.4). Mandan’s largest employers are HIT, Inc., Sanford Health Systems, and National Information Solutions Cooperative (p. 6).

Cultural Summary

There are several state parks within a day’s driving distance of Mandan, 7 of which are included in the state park passes available for checkout at the library by residents of Morton County.

Local attractions include Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park and Custer House, Raging Rivers Water Park, Huff Hills Ski Area, Dacotah Speedway auto racing, the N.D. Railroad Museum, Harmon Lake, 30 miles of walking and bike trails, and two golf courses.

The city also draws in thousands of visitors each year who attend annual events: Buggies n’ Blues, Rodeo Days, Art in the Park, Oktoberfest, Grill Fest, and weeknight summer concerts in Dykshoorn Park on Main Street. (City of Mandan, p.6).

Community Survey Results

The library conducted a survey on library usage, services, and user demographics in July and August 2018. Five hundred and twenty-nine (529) surveys were completed via SurveyMonkey. A paper survey was also included in the July water bill.

Library Services Use Summary

69.83% reported that they have a library card. 35.33% responded that they visited the library less than monthly and 39.39% reported visiting the library monthly, weekly, or daily. 83.97% responded that they never use the bookmobile; however, four hundred and ninety-three (493) of the respondents live in Mandan.

Overall, 29.54% would rate the library services as excellent and 39.52% would rate it as good.

Library User Summary

61.28% of the library’s users are between 25 and 64 years old and 35.02% are 65 or older. 62.92% have a college degree or higher, while 18.54% have some college education. 56.42% are employed or self-employed, and 38.91% are retired.

Comments Summary

In response to the question, “how could the library or its services be improved, if at all?”

- Although there were a few comments about libraries being outdated and/or obsolete, the majority of commenters expressed the need for a larger and more updated facility in order to increase programming, increase collection size, provide more study and meeting rooms for public use, provide more comfortable furniture, and “get rid of the horrible smell.”
- “Does not need to be improved. It is adequate for the few individuals that use it. It is an outdated service.”
- “The building limits what can be done in the library. More meeting space (space in general) would be wonderful. More technology integration and programming too. I think that the way a city supports its library is very telling about the importance it places on learning and academics in general. If we want our community and students to be successful, we need to give the library the resources it needs to provide those additional services. Many people believe that the library is in a beautiful historic building so we shouldn’t move it but for the library to be a functional and progressive part of the community, it absolutely needs to be in a larger and better building.”
- Comments indicated a need to make technological improvements and add additional public use computers.
- Comments indicated a need to improve our customer service.
- Comments indicated a need to improve our marketing to the community.
- A few commenters requested the library be open more hours especially on weekends.
- “I was thrilled to see a change in the Summer Reading program this year! The incentive-based rewards had a far greater impact in getting my non-readers to read, than the smaller weekly prizes from years past.”
- “We love having the bookmobile come to our town. We only visit the Mandan library if we missed the bookmobile.” “Never stop the bookmobile!”

In response to the question, “how would having an updated library building influence your use of library services, resources, and programs, if at all?”

- Probably due to the political environment surrounding the City of Mandan’s design proposal to redevelop the west end of Main Street during our community survey, we received several comments expressing their disapproval of moving the library across the street to the former Central Market Building combined with an event hall. The majority of the respondents against updating/moving/changing the library indicated that they did not have a library card, did not use the library, and were retired. In addition, many of these individuals marked services and their importance as “Don’t Know/NA” or “Not Important.”
- “Please do not spend more taxpayer money to move the library. The Central Market building has so much potential for other businesses which will bring traffic to the west side of Main St. I love to read books but feel people are going away from that and a new library will not draw people to Mandan” “No need. Try reducing property tax instead of unnecessary building!” “Moving to a new facility (Central Market) would be an improvement.”
- About 50% of comments indicated that an updated library building would not influence their use of the library; however, most of those commenters expanded to say they are frequent users already and would remain frequent users. The other half indicated that an updated library building would make them use the library more, spend more time there, and not have to go to Bismarck for library resources.

- “Not at all—we will still keep coming weekly!!” “Would love to see updates, but we love our library and will support it either way.” “I would spend more time there—I wouldn’t go to Bismarck library anymore—I’d stay here in Mandan.” “As a resident of Mandan we often go to the Bismarck Public library more (and spend time there) than Mandan just because of selection and relaxing setting.”
- “More accessible/visible to the public. Need for newer technology and useful spaces. The library should be the hub of discovery and knowledge for the community, a new space would add ability to provide services to all ages.”
- Comments indicated that many people enjoy the library being in an historical building.

Library S.W.O.T. Analysis

Strengths

- Four staff have a Master’s degree in library science
- Two staff are able to offer Notary services
- “small town” library friendliness; staff know many patrons by name
- Circulation handles reference questions very professionally even with limited time constraints
- Bookmobile is serving county as well as city
- Relationship with state library and rest of CDLN consortium
- Strong children’s programs
- Developing adult programs
- Adult book clubs
- Proximity to Dykshoorn Park
- Offer proctoring services
- Excellent hours of service, open 7 days/week, closed 8 days/year
- Lots of natural light
- Library is a passport acceptance facility with 5 passport acceptance agents on staff
- Place where people can come and learn for no charge
- Easy to get to from any direction
- Ongoing Friends of the Library book sale
- Free resources – print and electronic
- Good parking
- Hardworking staff who care and want to make a difference

Weaknesses

- Facilities outdated, needing improvement & more space
- Scattered Village displays take up too much space
- Entrance to library very shabby looking & front desk too messy which gives a poor first impression
- Rice Bowl employees smoking close to building
- Parking
- Floor plan & building shape
- Lack of teen programs
- Not enough storage
- Smell from Rice Bowl

- Cost of fixing current building problems
- Lack of teens using library
- Staff retention at lower-ranking positions
- Big windows take away from shelving space
- Lack of space
- Years of delayed maintenance – carpet, walls, ceiling tiles, smell
- Uncomfortable furniture
- staff area is crowded
- smell from sewer/sewer back-up
- If the Rice Bowl's lease is not renewed, it would have a significant impact on the library's budget.
- Due to the design of the building, it can be difficult to monitor activity throughout the building.

Opportunities

- Active Friends of the Library group with a larger membership
- Being the “hub” of the city – where you go to find out about Mandan and Morton County
- County outreach
- Developing teen/young adult programming
- Potential move if able to make it a functional, fresh space
- Collaboration with community or civic groups of all kinds
- Enhanced meeting room space could lead to displays, art exhibits, workshops, public education forums by organizations who are already doing these things or have the ability but need a space to host them
- More space for programs and staff
- More meeting room space
- Expand services and increase collection
- Updated space/equipment to keep up with changing digital world
- Focus on literacy and cultural experiences would benefit entire community
- Utilize social media for marketing
- Music in the Park
- Received grant to expand outreach services

Threats

- Legislation/Mill levy support
- Lack of change
- Lack of marketing
- Mandan cardholders use BPL instead
- Perception that library is no longer needed
- Fundraising for move/current building repairs will be challenging
- Residents do not want library to move because current building is historical
- Staff burnout
- Misconceptions in the community about what a library does and has to offer other than materials for checkout
- City commissioners are non-users
- West Main St. is pretty quiet as far as businesses/vacant buildings
- People need a reason to come to the library

Community Needs

Community Need #1 Improve Customer Service

Responses to the survey indicated that the library's patrons feel that the customer service they receive is not at the level they would like it to be. Comments on the survey included: "Librarians could be more friendly, helpful, and not so condescending", "improve customer service – attitude", and low rankings for customer service in general.

Goal: Improve Customer Service

Objectives:

1. Develop a customer service policy that includes a "No" list and an interacting with teens section
Time Frame: Ongoing
2. Conduct annual customer service staff training
Time Frame: Ongoing
3. Have staff enforce library policies consistently
Time Frame: Ongoing

Community Need #2 Address Facilities Needs

Responses to the survey indicated that there is a need to address ongoing issues with the current building. Common responses included a bad smell throughout the building, bathrooms, dirty tables, and infrastructure.

Goal: Develop a Facility Maintenance Plan

Objectives:

1. Research sample maintenance plans
2. Consult with appropriate vendors
3. Determine financial obligations (Library or City)

Time Frame: December 31, 2023

Goal: Repair and improve facilities (Immediate/short term)

Objectives:

1. Assess building for repair needs & make necessary repairs
Time Frame: Ongoing
2. Clean current facility
Time Frame: Ongoing
3. Conduct outside maintenance assessment & make necessary repairs (cleanup/painting/landscaping/etc.)
Time Frame: Ongoing
4. Repair west end deck
Time Frame: December 31, 2019

Goal: Conduct Cost Analysis for City VS. Private Contractor for Janitorial/Maintenance Services

Objectives:

1. Create list of expected job duties for maintenance/janitorial services
2. Hire private contractor if determined more beneficial

Time Frame: December 31, 2020

Community Need #3 Develop Plan to Update Current Building or New Location

Survey comments included a desire for more meeting room space for both library programs and public use, better computer area, comfortable furniture, larger collection, and more space in general. There were mixed opinions about whether the library should move to a new facility or remain in the current building, with improvements being made to it instead.

Goal: Develop Plan to Update Current Building or Move to New Location

Objectives:

1. Research & contract with a library consulting firm for fundraising, design, etc. writing a Request for Proposal (RFP), if appropriate
Time Frame: December 31, 2023
2. Research & contract for architectural services writing a Request for Proposal (RFP), if appropriate
Time Frame: December 31, 2023
3. Create a fundraising campaign
Time Frame: December 31, 2020
4. Conduct site visits to other similar sized libraries (Dickinson, Williston, West Fargo, etc.)
Time Frame: December 31, 2020
5. Evaluate feasibility of using 2nd floor
Time Frame: December 31, 2023

Goal: Review Existing Floor Plan for Better Space Utilization

Objectives:

1. Remove Scattered Village display/request owning agency to remove
2. Inventory furniture on hand
3. Select excess furniture not needed
4. Receive Board &/or Commission approval to sell excess furniture

Time Frame: December 31, 2023

Goal: Purchase & Install Larger Outdoor Book Drop

1. Research to determine the best book drop to purchase
2. Make request to Friends of Library to purchase new book drop
3. Make arrangements to install book drop

Time Frame: December 31, 2023

Community Need #4 Create a More Welcoming Environment for Teens

Responses to the survey indicated that the public would like to see more programs aimed at teens and a dedicated space for teens to use. Library staff will receive training on interacting with teens to help ensure that teens feel welcome at the library.

Goal: Create a More Welcoming Environment for Teens

Objectives:

1. Remodel Teen Zone including furnishings and technology
2. Provide staff training on interacting with teens
3. Explore age restricting computers in the YA area

Time Frame: December 31, 2019

Community Need #5 Collection

Responses to the survey indicated that improvement is needed for the collection. Suggestions included having more copies of titles by current and popular authors, more copies of specific ebook titles, and more ebooks in general. The nonfiction collection is in need of significant weeding and updating.

Goal: Update & Expand Collection

Objectives:

1. Deselect Nonfiction
Time Frame: December 31, 2020
2. Update Nonfiction collection
Time Frame: December 31, 2020
3. Explore options to expand eBook offerings
Time Frame: December 31, 2022
4. Catalog board games
Time Frame: December 31, 2019
5. Explore options for creating "library of things"
Time Frame: December 31, 2021

Community Need #6 Marketing/PR

Responses to the survey indicated that there is a lack of marketing for many of the library's programs, services, and resources. Specific comments included: "I rarely hear about anything happening at the library", "City website poor. Not easy to navigate", and "I don't ever see any advertisement of services offered anywhere."

Goal: Improve Marketing & Public Relations

Objectives:

1. Market at front desk by offering patrons at least 1 program or service
Time Frame: Ongoing
2. Create an email correspondence list (Patrons must opt-in)
Time Frame: December 31, 2021
3. Explore how, or if, we can add things to the community access channel
Time Frame: December 31, 2023
4. Utilize press releases for events, programs, etc.
Time Frame: Ongoing

Goal: Develop a New Website

Objectives:

1. Request approval from City & County Commissions to have our own website
2. Develop online registration for programs
3. Explore options for online library card applications

Time Frame: December 31, 2022

Goal: Create Marketing Plan

Objectives:

1. Hire library/marketing consultant
2. Streamline marketing material creation
3. Incorporate branding on all marketing/PR materials

Time Frame: December 31, 2022

Community Need #7 Technology Needs

Responses to the survey indicated that some of the library's users feel that the current technology is out-of-date, does not work properly or well enough, and that more could be offered.

Goal: Follow Current Technology Plan

Time Frame: Ongoing

Goal: Develop New Technology Plan (2020-2023)

Objectives:

1. File completed plan with NDSL

Time Frame: December 31, 2019

Goal: Add 1 Public PC by Front Entrance

Time Frame: December 31, 2019

Goal: Begin Accepting Credit Card Payments

1. Explore options for accepting credit card payments
2. Discuss with Finance Department

Time Frame: December 31, 2020

Goal: Change Email Client

1. Research email client options

Time Frame: December 31, 2020

Community Need #8 Programming Needs

Responses to the survey indicated an interest in more and a better variety of adult programs. Tween programming will be increased to keep the youth who "aged out" of the children's programs coming to the library until they are old enough to participate in the teen programs.

Goal : Increase Tween Program Offerings

Objectives:

1. Offer 2 tween (ages 8-12) programs per month

Time Frame: December 31, 2019

Goal: Add More Variety to Adult Programs

Time Frame: December 31, 2020

Community Need #9 Outreach Needs

Outside of the current bookmobile stops schedule, there has been very little outreach programming or services offered by the library. A grant from the Otto Bremer Trust will be used to kickstart new outreach programming and services.

Goal: Expand Outreach Services

Objectives:

1. Assess bookmobile schedule & make relevant changes
2. Purchase outreach program supplies (see OBT grant budget)
3. Collect community input to determine outreach needs by survey & public input meetings
4. Determine county program venues
5. Develop outreach program schedule
6. Upgrade bookmobile stereo system in order to make announcements
7. Install open flag on bookmobile
8. Explore options for purchasing an owning for Outreach
9. Purchase 2 laptop computers & an iPad for Outreach
10. Purchase bookcart for Outreach
11. Hire PT seasonal Outreach help for SRP

Time Frame: August 15, 2019

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